

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

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LIMDIS

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ALGIERS, PARIS,
RABAT, TRIPOLI, NOUAKCHOTT, TUNIS FROM CAIRO NOV 16:

QUOTE S E C R E T CAIRO 19105

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EG AL MO

SUBJECT: MUBARAK MEDIATION MISSION OVER SHAARA DISPUTE

1.AMBASSADOR AHMAD SIDQI, HEAD OF MFA AFRICAN DEPT,
WHO ACCOMPANIED VP MUBARAK ON HIS NOVEMBER 10-14 SAHARA
MEDIATION MISSION, MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS TO EMBOFFS
NOVEMBER 16:

2. MOROCCO. MUBARAK FOUND KING HASSON "FLEXIBLE",
APPARENTLY SEEKING TO FIND FACE-SAVING "WAY OUT" FOR
BOUMEDIENE. NEITHER GOE NOR KING BELIEVE THAT OAU
CONFERENCE EFFECTIVE WAY TO SOLVE DISPUTE, SINCE ALGERIA
COUNTING ON EIGHT OR NINE OAU MEMBER STATES TO PARROT
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ALGERIAN LINE, WHICH NOT TRUE MEDIATION. HASSAN PROPOSED
TO MUBARAK CONCEPT OF GROUP OF ARAB AND AFRICAN "WISE
MEN" (chiefs of state), WHO MIGHT TRAVEL BACK AND FORTH
BETWEEN RABAT AND ALGIERS FOR SHUTTLE-TYPE MEDIATION.
BOUMEDIENE FLATLY REJECTED PROPOSAL. HASSAN REPEATED
TO MUBARAK HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS THAT HE WILLING TO
HOLD PLEBISCITE IN SAHARA PROVIDED (A) SPANISH CENSUS

SHOWING 70,000 INHABITANTS, AS OPPOSED TO ALGERIAN CLAIM OF 300,000 SAHRAOUIS, BE BASIS OF BALLOTTING; AND (B) ALL "FOREIGN ELEMENTS" BE WITHDRAWN AS PART OF CEASE-FIRE. HASSAN ADMITTED THAT TROUBLES WITH ALGERIA/POLISARIO CAUSING MOROCCO ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IT COULD ILL AFFORD.

3. ALGERIA. MUBARAK FOUND BOUMEDIENE DISTURBINGLY OBDURATE, TO EXTENT THAT ALGERIA IN GOE EYEES LOSING PUBLIC RELATIONS BATTLE OVER SAHARA QUESTION. EGYPTIANS WERE PUZZLED BY ALGERIA'S BELLIGERENT TONE, SINCE GOE BELIEVES THAT ALGERIA WOULD FARE BADLY IN DIRECT MILITARY CONFRONTATION WITH MOROCCO, ALTHOUGH EVENTUAL OUTCOME WOULD PROBABLY BE MILITARY STALEMATE. BOUMEDIENE APPEARED SO VEHEMENT OVER SAHARA THAT SIDQI WONDERED ALOUD WHETHER BOUMEDIENE NOT FACING INTERNAL DISSIDENTS WHO WOULD LIKE TO BRING HIM DOWN ON SAHARA ISSUE. BOUMEDIENE HIMSELF ADMITTED THAT ALGERIAN FIVE-YEAR PLAN NOW SIX MONTHS BEHIND SCHEDULE DUE TO SAHRAOUI PROBLEMS.

4. FRENCH HOSTAGES. FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO CAIRO SENARD CONTACTED MUBARAK BEFORE DEPARTURE TO REQUEST GOE INTERVENTION WITH BOUMEDIENE TO SECURE RELEASE OF FRENCH HOSTAGES HELD BY POLISARIO. MUBARAK RAISED ISSUE WITH ALGERIANS, POINTING OUT THAT HOSTAGES HURTING ALGERIAN IMAGE, SINCE ALGERIAN DENIAL OF INVOLVEMENT CONTROL OF POLISARIO NO MORE CONVINCING THAN SOMALI DISCLAIMERS

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CONCERNING WESTERN SOMALI LIBERATION FRONT. BOUMEDIENE PROMISED TO INTERCEDE WITH POLISARIO GUERRILLAS TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF HOSTAGES AND SIDQI EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT HOSTAGES WOULD IN FACT BE RELEASED WITHIN "NEXT FEW DAYS."

5. FURUTE EGYPTIAN MEDIATION? ALTHOUGH MUBARAK MISSION PRODUCED NO "CONCRETE RESULTS" AS YET, SIDQI OPINED THAT MUBARAK DID MANAGE TO CALM DOWN TENSIONS BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA "SOMEWHAT". EGYPTIANS BELIEVE THAT POLISARIO RELEASE OF FRENCH HOSTAGES WOULD MAKE MUBARAK MISSION A SUCCESS AND, SHOULD IMMINENT RELEASE OF HOSTAGES MATERIALIZE, GOE WOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER SENDING MUBARAK BACK TO AREA FOR ANOTHER ROUND OF SAHARA MEDIATION. EILTS UNQUOTE VANCE

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